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September 29, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write today regarding concerns with your actions to weaken or eliminate the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) long-standing media ownership limits. The steps you have taken since you were elevated to chair of the agency, in concert with your reported plans to act on additional media ownership issues this fall, undercut – and threaten to do permanent damage to – the American tradition of local broadcasting. Taken as a whole, these actions will take a wrecking ball to the pillars of localism and diversity in local broadcasting. Moreover, these steps have been – and likely will be – adopted without the FCC engaging in a detailed, substantive evaluation of the current broadcast media landscape. We strongly believe that your agency should not take any further actions to relax its media ownership limits without a thorough public review of the state of the broadcast marketplace today.

For decades, Congress has imposed, and the FCC has maintained, limits on the number of broadcast stations one company can own nationwide. In addition, the FCC has retained its own limits on the number of stations a company can own in a single media market. These limits recognize the unique role and obligations of local broadcasters and ensure that consumers benefit from diverse viewpoints and perspectives on the nation's airwaves. They also respect the fact that broadcasters are stewards of the nation's airwaves and should take that responsibility seriously by maintaining close relationships with the communities that they serve. Moves to change these rules could sever that relationship and fundamentally change the nature of broadcasting in the United States. That is why we have grave concerns about your efforts to weaken those rules.

In April, you resurrected the now technologically-outdated and illogical UHF discount, which was recently repealed by the FCC based upon a substantial and extensive record. Reinstating this historical relic directly contradicts Congress' intent in adopting a statutory national media ownership cap. And this action has directly facilitated the largest proposed broadcast television merger in history, which would give one company ownership of enough stations to reach over 70 percent of the American population.

The same company at the heart of that unprecedented broadcast consolidation also is known for using joint sales agreements and other arrangements to exert operational control over other stations around the country that they do not own. And earlier this year, you revoked previous guidance stating that the FCC would take a hard look at those agreements in any merger to ensure that they are not being used to skirt the media ownership limits. In effect, this change suggests that the FCC will take a blind eye towards agreements that allow functional operational control of a station by another – creating even more *de facto* consolidation without FCC oversight.

Many find the timing of your media ownership actions troubling and question whether they were taken knowing that they were essential to the business plans of a single company. It is obvious that without your change to the UHF discount, this proposed merger would not have been initiated. Whether or not one believes your reinstatement of the discount to be suspect, that action raises serious doubts about whether the FCC is acting impartially in these matters. In any event, your action does not conform to the justification for the national ownership cap adopted by Congress as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Reports now suggest that you intend to eliminate or seriously weaken many of the FCC's remaining media ownership limits sometime this fall. Those reports indicate that you are considering removing many of the limits on ownership of multiple stations by a single company in a single market and repealing the FCC's ban on co-ownership of TV stations and newspapers in the same market. The sum total of such moves would be nothing less than a declaration by you, as the nation's sole broadcast regulator, that further consolidation in the broadcast media marketplace is warranted and welcome. For decades, Congress and the FCC have maintained that reasonable limits on the number of stations a single company can own both nationally and in a particular market materially benefit the public interest. If in fact you repeal these rules, it would fly in the face of this long history and the belief that these rules are warranted because of the unique role of broadcasters in this nation (a role not replicated by any other media entity).

Americans continue to have faith in their local broadcast stations. Moves to repeal the media ownership rules threatens to create a world of corporatized, nationalized content being force fed to consumers under the guise of local news and public affairs programming. This is not the broadcast media that Americans deserve.

Your dismissive approach to the need for and longstanding history of the nation's media ownership rules is quite concerning. At a minimum, the FCC should not take any further action to relax the media ownership rules until it has completed another full quadrennial media ownership review. In fact, this is why Congress created the quadrennial media ownership review – to ensure that any changes to the media ownership rules are based on a fulsome review of the current broadcast landscape. It was just a year ago, at the end of the most recent quadrennial review, that the FCC concluded that its existing media ownership rules were essential. And if anything, the rapid technological and practical changes in the broadcast space since that decision suggest that the FCC must build a new thorough record about the state of broadcasting today.

The nation's media ownership limits have directly contributed to the trust that Americans have placed in their local broadcasters. Eliminating these rules and creating massive broadcast conglomerates directly contravenes the will of Congress and the public interest.

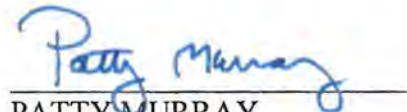
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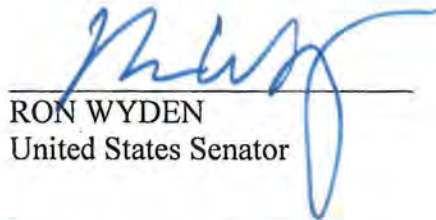
BILL NELSON
United States Senator



BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator



PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator



RON WYDEN
United States Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator



JACK REED
United States Senator



MARIA CANTWELL
United States Senator



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



CLAIRE MCCASKILL
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator



TOM UDALL
United States Senator



JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator



JEFFREY A. MERKLEY
United States Senator



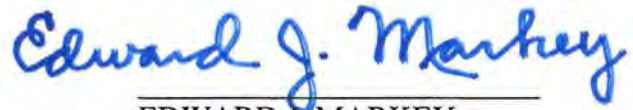
AL FRANKEN
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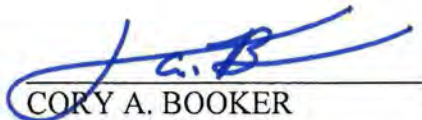
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
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TAMMY BALDWIN
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EDWARD J. MARKEY
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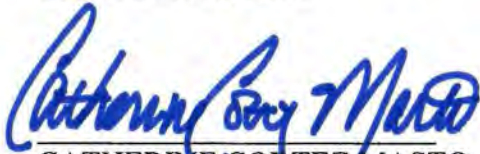
TAMMY DUCKWORTH
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MARGARET WOOD HASSAN
United States Senator



GARY C. PETERS
United States Senator



CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO
United States Senator



AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Menendez:

Thank you for your letter expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

When I became Chairman in January 2017, there were several pending petitions asking for reconsideration of the Commission's 2016 Order. Last year, the FCC resolved those petitions by making appropriate and balanced reforms to the Commission's broadcast ownership rules. For example, while broadcasters generally asked the Commission to remove any restriction on one company owning two of the top-four television stations in any local market, the FCC instead only provided broadcasters with the opportunity to obtain an exception on a case-by-case basis to the so-called "top four" prohibition.

In light of this history, I must respectfully decline your request not to implement any changes made to the media ownership rules in our 2017 Order on Reconsideration. The FCC has a statutory duty to ensure that our broadcast ownership rules keep up with changes in the media marketplace, and there is no reason to further delay the implementation of 2017 reforms that were themselves unreasonably delayed. Moreover, I would point out that the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit was asked to stop the FCC from implementing these changes and earlier this year declined to do so. On the other hand, I can assure you that no further changes will be made to the rules covered by quadrennial review mandate until the Commission completes another quadrennial review. We are required to commence such a review in 2018, and I anticipate that the FCC will take that step later this year.

Turning to the national ownership cap, the Commission is currently in the midst of a holistic review of that regulation. In addition to asking whether we should eliminate the UHF Discount, we have sought comment on whether the 39 percent cap should be maintained, raised, lowered, or eliminated. I called on the Commission to launch such a holistic review back in 2013 and am pleased that we were able to finally take that step last December. This, in my view,

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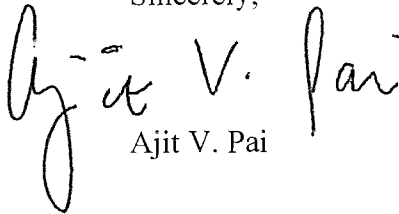
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You also request that the Commission stop approving any broadcast mergers or acquisitions on a blanket basis. Your letter doesn't reference any statutory authority for taking such a drastic step, and I am not aware of any. Rather, I believe that the proper course of action is to continue to evaluate applications on a case-by-case basis.

With respect to the Sinclair transaction that is specifically mentioned in your letter, however, I would point out that the FCC's informal 180-day clock has now been stopped for over four months because of the parties' failure to supply the Commission with the information necessary for us to assess the proposed merger.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for your letter expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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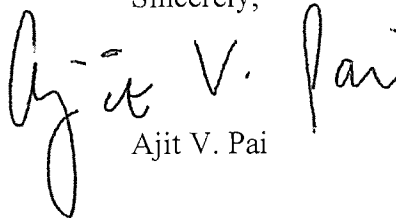
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I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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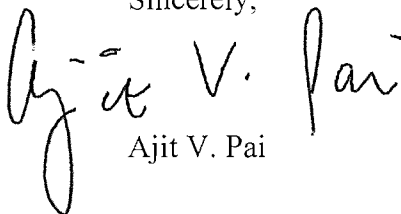
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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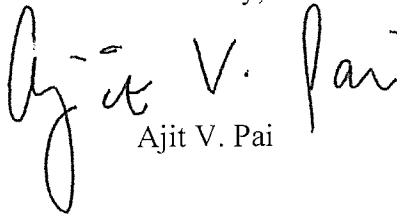
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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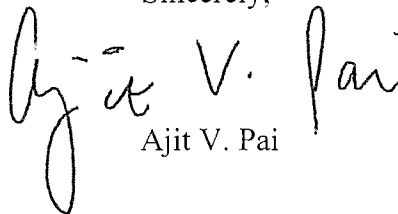
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

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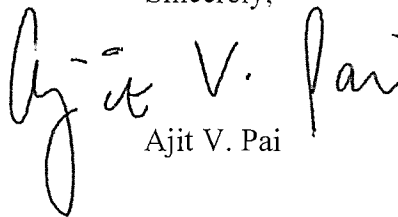
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The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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In light of this history, I must respectfully decline your request not to implement any changes made to the media ownership rules in our 2017 Order on Reconsideration. The FCC has a statutory duty to ensure that our broadcast ownership rules keep up with changes in the media marketplace, and there is no reason to further delay the implementation of 2017 reforms that were themselves unreasonably delayed. Moreover, I would point out that the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit was asked to stop the FCC from implementing these changes and earlier this year declined to do so. On the other hand, I can assure you that no further changes will be made to the rules covered by quadrennial review mandate until the Commission completes another quadrennial review. We are required to commence such a review in 2018, and I anticipate that the FCC will take that step later this year.

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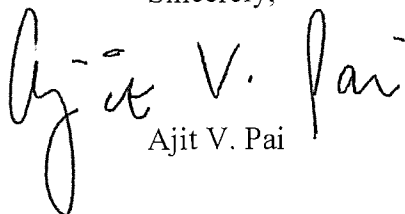
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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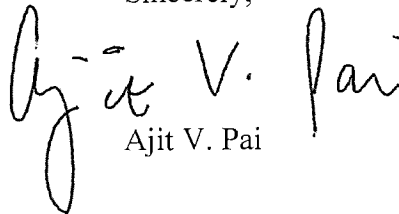
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Brian Schatz
United States Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schatz:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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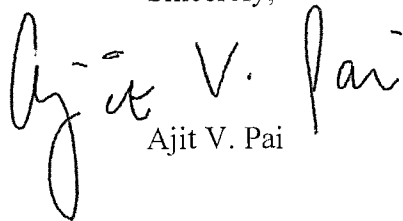
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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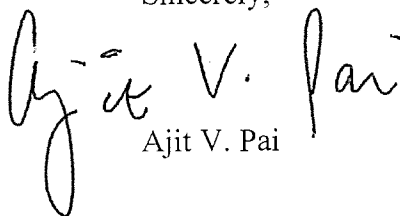
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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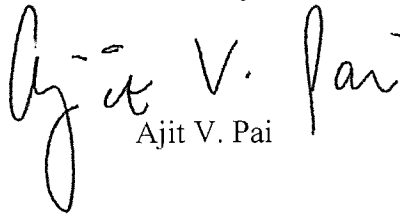
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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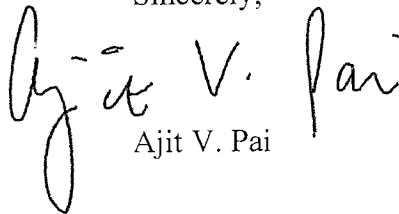
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

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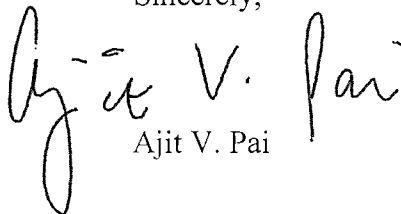
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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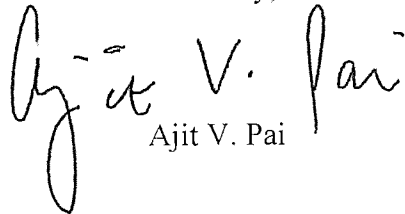
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senate
359 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Booker:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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In light of this history, I must respectfully decline your request not to implement any changes made to the media ownership rules in our 2017 Order on Reconsideration. The FCC has a statutory duty to ensure that our broadcast ownership rules keep up with changes in the media marketplace, and there is no reason to further delay the implementation of 2017 reforms that were themselves unreasonably delayed. Moreover, I would point out that the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit was asked to stop the FCC from implementing these changes and earlier this year declined to do so. On the other hand, I can assure you that no further changes will be made to the rules covered by quadrennial review mandate until the Commission completes another quadrennial review. We are required to commence such a review in 2018, and I anticipate that the FCC will take that step later this year.

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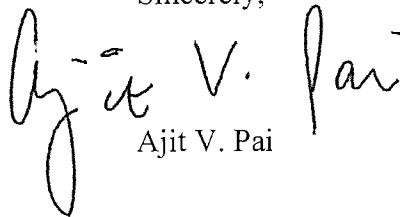
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You also request that the Commission stop approving any broadcast mergers or acquisitions on a blanket basis. Your letter doesn't reference any statutory authority for taking such a drastic step, and I am not aware of any. Rather, I believe that the proper course of action is to continue to evaluate applications on a case-by-case basis.

With respect to the Sinclair transaction that is specifically mentioned in your letter, however, I would point out that the FCC's informal 180-day clock has now been stopped for over four months because of the parties' failure to supply the Commission with the information necessary for us to assess the proposed merger.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
B85 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hassan:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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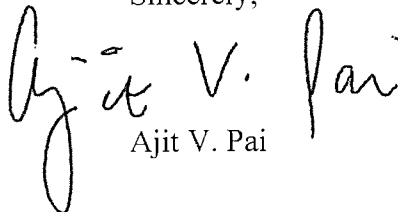
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
B40A Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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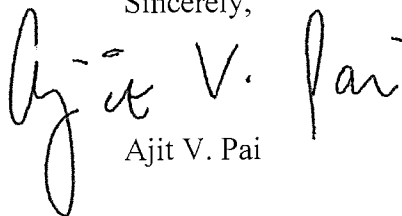
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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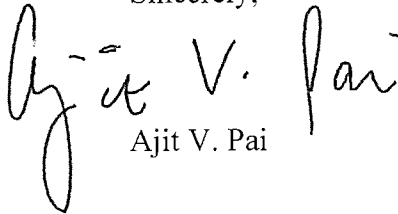
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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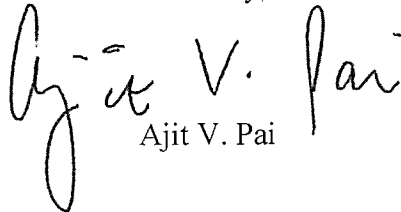
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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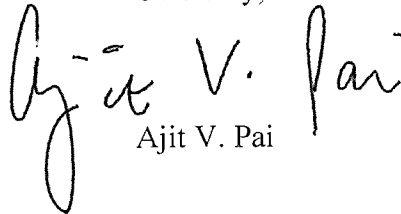
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
G12 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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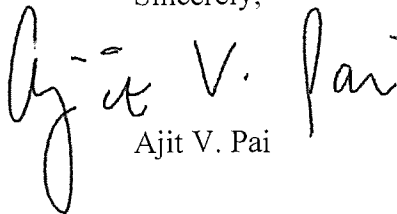
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Peters:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

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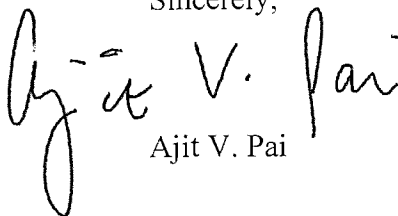
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 14, 2018

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letters expressing your views regarding recent reforms of the FCC's broadcast ownership rules. As you know, federal law requires the Commission to reexamine many of these rules every four years. Unfortunately, the prior Commission failed to complete its 2010 review in a timely manner and instead decided to incorporate that review into its 2014 review. When the Commission in 2016 finally issued an order purporting to resolve the 2010 and 2014 reviews, it failed to modify the broadcast ownership rules to match the modern media marketplace. For example, it declined to eliminate the decades-old newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rule, which President Clinton's first FCC Chairman called perverse back in 2013.

When I became Chairman in January 2017, there were several pending petitions asking for reconsideration of the Commission's 2016 Order. Last year, the FCC resolved those petitions by making appropriate and balanced reforms to the Commission's broadcast ownership rules. For example, while broadcasters generally asked the Commission to remove any restriction on one company owning two of the top-four television stations in any local market, the FCC instead only provided broadcasters with the opportunity to obtain an exception on a case-by-case basis to the so-called "top four" prohibition.

In light of this history, I must respectfully decline your request not to implement any changes made to the media ownership rules in our 2017 Order on Reconsideration. The FCC has a statutory duty to ensure that our broadcast ownership rules keep up with changes in the media marketplace, and there is no reason to further delay the implementation of 2017 reforms that were themselves unreasonably delayed. Moreover, I would point out that the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit was asked to stop the FCC from implementing these changes and earlier this year declined to do so. On the other hand, I can assure you that no further changes will be made to the rules covered by quadrennial review mandate until the Commission completes another quadrennial review. We are required to commence such a review in 2018, and I anticipate that the FCC will take that step later this year.

Turning to the national ownership cap, the Commission is currently in the midst of a holistic review of that regulation. In addition to asking whether we should eliminate the UHF Discount, we have sought comment on whether the 39 percent cap should be maintained, raised, lowered, or eliminated. I called on the Commission to launch such a holistic review back in 2013 and am pleased that we were able to finally take that step last December. This, in my view,

is the right way to review the national ownership cap as opposed to looking on an ad hoc basis at only one aspect of the cap, the UHF Discount.

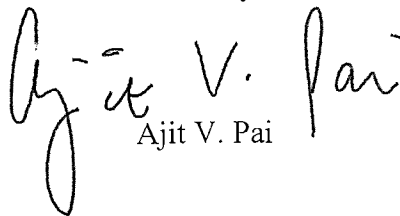
The comment cycle on the national ownership cap Notice of Proposed Rulemaking has now closed, and we are now in the process of reviewing the record. In my view, it is important for the Commission to complete this holistic review of the national ownership cap, and I therefore must respectfully decline your request to stop work on it.

You also request that the Commission stop approving any broadcast mergers or acquisitions on a blanket basis. Your letter doesn't reference any statutory authority for taking such a drastic step, and I am not aware of any. Rather, I believe that the proper course of action is to continue to evaluate applications on a case-by-case basis.

With respect to the Sinclair transaction that is specifically mentioned in your letter, however, I would point out that the FCC's informal 180-day clock has now been stopped for over four months because of the parties' failure to supply the Commission with the information necessary for us to assess the proposed merger.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the handwritten signature, the name "Ajit V. Pai" is printed in a standard, sans-serif font.

Ajit V. Pai